



MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD TO HOLD HEARING IN PATERSON, NEW JERSEY ON THE DANGERS OF REACTIVE CHEMICALS IN THE WORKPLACE

CSB STAFF WILL PRESENT MAJOR REPORT FINDINGS

**Board will hear from injured workers, labor groups, industry representatives,
elected officials and the public**

**9 A.M. THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2002
CITY HALL BUILDING
155 MARKET STREET
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY**

U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board investigators will present findings of a major nationwide study on the hazards from improper mixing of chemicals in the workplace. Such "reactive chemicals" are the prime suspect in the recent explosion at the Kaltech signage company operation in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City, which the CSB is investigating.

The meeting will be held in Paterson, New Jersey where in 1998, nine workers were injured in a large explosion at the Morton chemical plant, an accident investigated by the CSB. Another reactive chemical explosion -- at Napp Technologies in Lodi in 1995 killed five and caused a major evacuation in the area.

The CSB studied 167 incidents over a 20-year period, in which 108 workers were killed and 50 explosions or chemical releases affected the general public off-site. Due to limitations in available data, investigators believe the problem may be even larger than these figures suggest.

The purpose of the hearing is to let interested groups and members of the public react to the study and suggest solutions. Proposals could range from recommending that the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) put reactive hazards back on its regulatory agenda, to suggesting non-regulatory approaches that could be taken by industry and labor.

AGENDA:

9 a.m. Opening statements including remarks by former Senator Frank Lautenberg; 9:15 a.m. Injured workers; 9:45 a.m. Staff presents report; 11 a.m. Industry panel; 11:35 a.m. Labor panel; 1:10 p.m. Remarks by Sen. John Corzine (D-NJ) and New Jersey environmental officials; 1:40 p.m. Technical panel; 2:30 p.m. Public Comments. The event will be broadcast free over the Internet at www.chemsafety.gov.

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For full agenda and other information: www.chemsafety.gov**